

“World War I and the Policing Power of the State”

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Thesis Statement:

During World War I, playing on the fears, divisions and livelihoods of American citizens, war-time legislative and executive actions, combined with inculcating hyper-patriotic propaganda, exacerbated preexisting rooted division within American society.

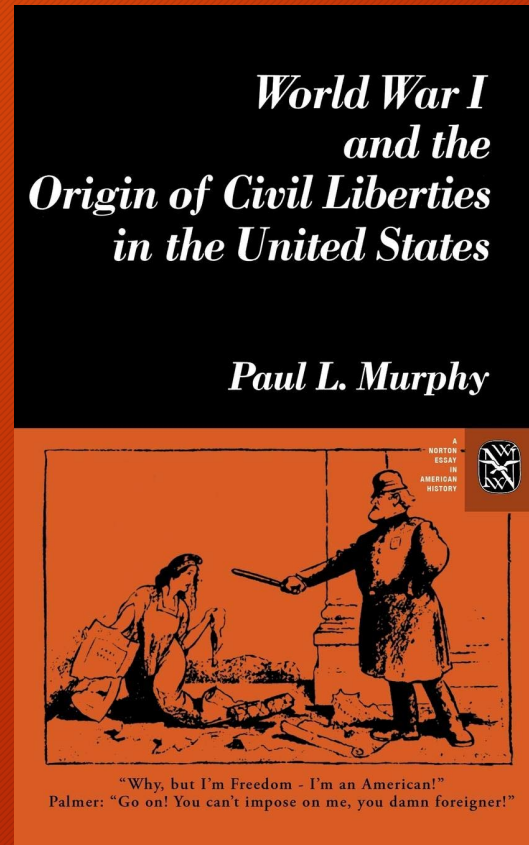


Secondary Sources:

Paul Murphy: *World War I and the Origin of Civil Liberties*.

Murphy's *World War I and the Origin of Civil Liberties in the United States*, explains how the Federal Government was able to accumulate the power it was able to during and after World War I. His chapter on “The Emergence of Civil Liberties Issues”, further suggests that it was not necessarily a matter of manipulation or political tactics but rather that civil liberties were forfeited by citizens who were persuaded by Wilson’s patriotic position.

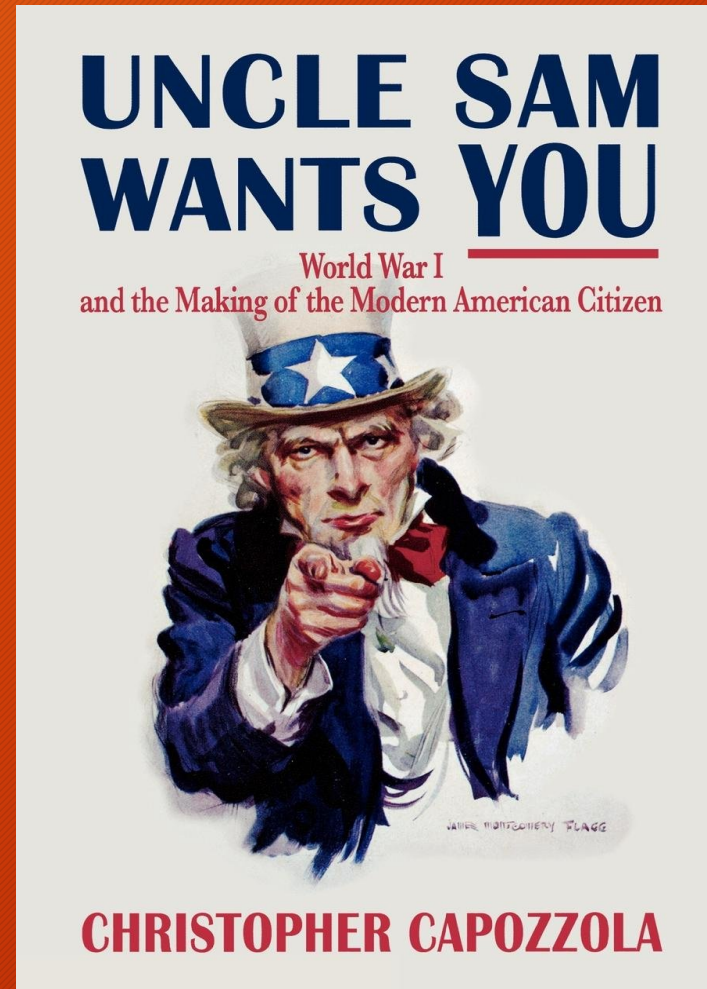
Murphy, Paul. *World War I and the Origin of Civil Liberties in the United States*. New York: Norton and Co., 1979.



Christopher Capozzola: *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen.*

In *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen* Christopher Capozzola discusses the ways in which World War I was the genesis for the modern American citizen and how mass mobilization and the use of patriotic hysteria led to significant increase in power in the United States government.

Capozzola, Christopher. *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

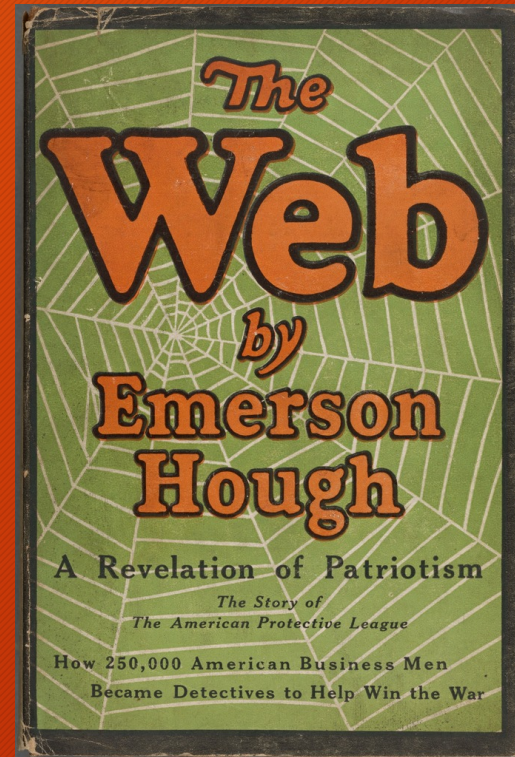


Primary Sources:

Emerson Hough, *The Web: A Revelation of Patriotism*.

Emerson Hough's, *The Web: A Revelation of Patriotism* published in 1919 by "Authority of the National Directors of the American Protective League, a vast, silent, volunteer army organized with the approval and operated under the direction of the United States Department of Justice, Bureau of Investigation." (title page).

Hough, Emerson. *The Web*. Reilly & Lee Publishers, 1919.



Conference Committee on National Preparedness, “The Advance Agents of the Hun,” 1917.

This statement issued by New York Committee on National Preparedness reveals the level of antagonism that World War I propaganda campaigns inflicted. The patriotic inculcation of American citizens obliged them to their “American duties” of taking national security matters into their own hands and by offering fellow citizens up to “public scorn”, follows an ideology of extra-legal vigilante behavior.

Conference Committee on National Preparedness, “The Advance Agents of the Hun,” [1917], portfolio 315, no. 2, Rare Book Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

“Men of America, be of clear vision!... Promptly deliver up these agents to public scorn and to the law, so that when you go to your home at night you can look into the innocent eyes of your children and be unafraid”



Conclusion:

As we examine American social history, paying close attention to social structures and the intercourse of power in classes within society, examples of arguably unnecessary government power seizures can be witnessed. In the wake of crises, whether actual or sensationalized, American citizens have been made malleable, susceptible to do anything to protect the status quo, the existing state of American social and political policies. During World War I, war-time legislative and executive action, combined with inculcating hyper-patriotic propaganda, exacerbated preexisting rooted division within American society, especially those still unsettled from the Civil War. Civil liberties such as the freedom of speech or the freedom to assemble were forfeited by American citizens in the name of the greater good as vigilante-citizen police, endorsed by their government, took to the streets and media. Without force, or standard repression, the federal government was able to bolster centralized power beyond the state of emergency, expanding and modernizing the United States federal government.

